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NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

The Life and Work of George Sylvester Morris. A Chapter in the History of American Thought in the Nineteenth Century. By R. M. WENLEY. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1917.—pp. xv, 332.

Professor Wenley has accomplished a difficult task with rare skill and success. The meaning of his sub-title is amplified in the following statement from his preface, where, speaking of Professor Morris, he says:—"His intellectual history, despite its sudden end, epitomizes that of many minds in his day, because it embodies a representative human experience peculiar to the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the English-speaking world." Mr. Wenley's achievement is measured by the fact that his biography actually sets forth in a living form this epitome of a great intellectual experience of the later nineteenth century. The reader is not simply told about it. The development of the generation, its intellectual transition and struggle, is depicted as it was embodied in a personality of wonderful sincerity. Sympathetic insight, delicacy of touch, fidelity of portraiture, have combined with hard work and an understanding of the spiritual questionings characteristic of the transition out of Puritan Evangelicism, to produce a work which is both a faithful biography of an unusual human soul and a contribution of signal value to the history of American thought. The task was not made easy by materials ready at hand. In Professor Morris, the traditional constraint and self-consciousness of New England Puritanism had been sublimated into a spiritual detachment from all that narrowly concerned his own ego. He had learned to consume his own smoke, to transmute his personal experiences into something of impersonal meaning, and he would have found it indelicate and impossible to dwell on the incidents of his personal history. As a consequence, it was hard to gather together even the main external facts of his life, to say nothing of the intellectual crises through which he passed. Professor Wenley's scholarly *pietas* surmounted the difficulties. The result is a book which it is to be hoped will serve as a precedent for later records of other American scholars and teachers. There are traditions which are harmful, and there is equally in American life a lack of tradition which is harmful. Studies which should unite as does Professor Wenley's book the biographical element with the significant movements of the time would supply a much needed sense of the continuous ties that bind our present to the past. Few things would so well lend richness and distinction to the intellectual life, which in spite of vigor will be meager till it is fused with a sense of the labors and achievements of the bygone generations who have worn the roads along which we may press forward to new goals.

If I have said more about the book than about its subject, Professor Morris,

it is because to write of the latter in this place would be but to summarize the book itself. George Sylvester Morris was leaving Dartmouth College just as the Civil War was breaking out. Twenty years later he assumed the Chair of Ethics and History of Philosophy in the University of Michigan. In 1889 came his untimely death. During this period, a much greater transformation came over America than it is even yet possible to realize. Mr. Morris suffered the spiritual conflicts of the transition. For himself he achieved, by means of a combination of Greek and German thought, a triumphant reconciliation of traditional religion with rational intelligence, of the older New England individualism with devoted loyalty to the purpose and meaning of objective institutions, of moral faith with the pronouncements of science. This generation finds the solution too easy; the formula of reconciliation too much a product of desire; the combination too much a mixture of incompatible factors. But Mr. Morris's personality, his spirit, was a prophecy of the possibility of a true union of substantial tradition and the free life of thought. No person ever came under his influence without attaining a greater faith in both of these things. In education he was a power among the scholars of those days who led the American College away from its provincialism into broader fields of learning, and keener methods of criticism. His old pupils and friends will rejoice that his life has found such a worthy record, that others may also come within the range of his learning and charm.

JOHN DEWEY.

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Studies in the History of Ideas. Edited by the Department of Philosophy of Columbia University. New York, Columbia University Press, 1918. Volume I.—pp. 272.

The first study in this volume, by Mr. M. T. McClure, is on "Appearance and Reality in Greek Philosophy." Mr. McClure finds in Greek Philosophy three well-defined types of interest—the *scientific*, which is uppermost in the Milesians, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Democritus; the *mystical*, which is uppermost in the Pythagoreans and Plato; and the *humanistic*, which leads to the problem of the adjustment of nature and convention, which, blending with the mystical interest, is central in Pythagoras, Plato (both in his political philosophy and his theory of knowledge), and in Aristotle. Heracleitus stands apart, "happily free from initial presuppositions and concerned with a description of the immediate." The paper concludes with a brief pragmatic criticism of absolutistic monism and the assertion that "Reality is a choice of values." The three motives of Mr. McClure are undoubtedly operative in Greek philosophy, but I cannot admit that philosophers can be classified in terms of their disjunction. Plato and Aristotle had strong scientific interests and Empedocles, for example, was not devoid of the mystical interest. Mr. McClure's criticism of absolutism is too meager to be of any value.

Mr. Walter Veazie, on "The Meaning of *Φύσις* in Early Greek Philosophy" makes an interesting collation of passages from Greek writers in support of